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Employee FRONTLINE

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A newsletter from the WA State Employee Assistance Program



Productivity suffers when conflicts drag on. This is why using conflict resolution skills makes you a valuable employee. Some easy tips include:

- ◆ Communicate often, and check differences quickly with coworkers. You'll zap most conflicts this way.
- ◆ When differences linger, carve out time for focused discussion. Share your concerns by describing what you experience—what, where, and when. ("Tom, you are not coming to Monday meetings prepared.") And share the impact: ("This makes meetings take longer.")
- ◆ Omit theories about motives (e.g., "I think you don't want to be part of this team.")
- ◆ Ask, "Am I doing something or not doing something that contributes to this issue?"
- ◆ Join the solution. ("How can we solve this problem and create a better situation?")
- ◆ Agree to follow up, and you will reinforce changes and improve relationships.

If you wish to build upon your conflict resolution skills, DES/ Training division offers a number classes to choose from. [Click here](#) for a description of classes and dates.

Also, there are several [WA Mediation Association](#) approved organizations, who offer trainings in mediation and conflict resolution skills to the general public. To learn more, go to: washingtonmediation.org.

2016 Political Talk at Work

Political discussions on the job cause many employees to feel stressed, argumentative, and less productive, according to a survey released by the American Psychological Association. More than one in four younger employees reported feeling stressed out because of political discussions at work, and more than twice as many men as women said political talk is making them less productive. Potential negative outcomes include feeling more isolated from colleagues, avoidance of others with a different view, and an increase in workplace hostility. You may want to reduce political discussions if these complaints match your experience.

Interacting with Autistic Persons

Autism is a neurological variation in how brain connectivity works for about 1%-2% of the population. Autistic persons think, interact, and sense their environment differently. Brain activity is more intense and dynamic, and not as orderly. These differences are visible in social interactions, so be patient in your communication. Autistic persons may ask more questions, restate what you said, or talk more to ensure understanding. Be prepared for unfiltered or literal responses so you do not misinterpret something said as being intentionally rude. Also, anticipate less eye contact, which can be distracting and make it more difficult for an autistic person to process information. Remember to treat all employees with the dignity and respect they deserve. Learn more about autism at www.autismspeaks.org.

Mental Health of College Students



Mental health problems of college students get more media attention in the fall months when grade pressures, anxiety, depression, and relationship issues pile up. How to cope with stress can be learned, but not all students learn adequate coping skills from parents, caregivers, and siblings. If you have a college student plowing away, be sure to inquire about campus

support resources when you hear “how awful everything is going.” Discourage isolation and counsel your student to strive for balance. Discourage substance abuse and never supply medications that have not been prescribed to your student as a way of helping him or her study or cope. Learn about signs and symptoms of depression and anxiety to increase your awareness of these problems. Do not hesitate to ask your student about suicidal thoughts if you see high levels of burdensomeness, the uttering of statements like, “People would be better off without me,” a sense of disconnection (“I don’t belong here”) or commenting about killing oneself, even in jest.

Maintaining Wellness Under High-Stress

Fifteen to 20 percent of adults report high job stress, but these same employees are less likely to participate in wellness programs. It appears that the more stress you face, the more at-risk you might be to neglect healthy countermeasures. High stress affects physical health, mental health, eating habits, and how you perceive your overall health. Avoid the downward spiral to ill health. Seek inspiration to become proactive in wellness. Experiencing high job stress? Don't wait to “feel like it” before engaging in a wellness program—go now!

Employees enrolled in PEBB can participate in a free online wellness program and **earn \$125** towards their deductible.

Go to www.smarthealth.hca.wa.gov to learn more. Smart[]Health

Meth User in the Family

Methamphetamine (meth) is a powerful central nervous system stimulant. It is highly addictive, illegally manufactured, and sold on the street as a powder or in crystal form called “ice.” It can be swallowed, snorted, injected, or smoked. Meth destroys lives—both the addicts’ and their loved ones’. If your life is affected by a loved one’s addiction to meth: (1) learn about meth and seek guidance and support from an addiction expert, and (2) join a self-help group to give you the strength and hope needed to make the assertive and healthy decisions to protect your family’s well-being. These steps will prompt change likely to lead to a crisis of opportunity to motivate the meth user to accept treatment. Tools of intervention are “influence” and “leverage.” Influence is the value of the relationship the addict has with you or others that can sway him or her to accept treatment. Leverage is the capacity for you or others to potentially take away something the addict fears losing—a job, an opportunity, freedom, money, a relationship, support, a roof overhead, visitation privileges, etc.—as a motivator to accept help. Intervention tools work in tandem to bring about success, and almost all family-referred admissions for treatment, whether for meth or other substance abuse, follow this path. To seek assistance, contact the EAP at 877-313-4455 or call the:

Washington Recovery Help Line
1-866-789-1511